

# *Chains of Change*

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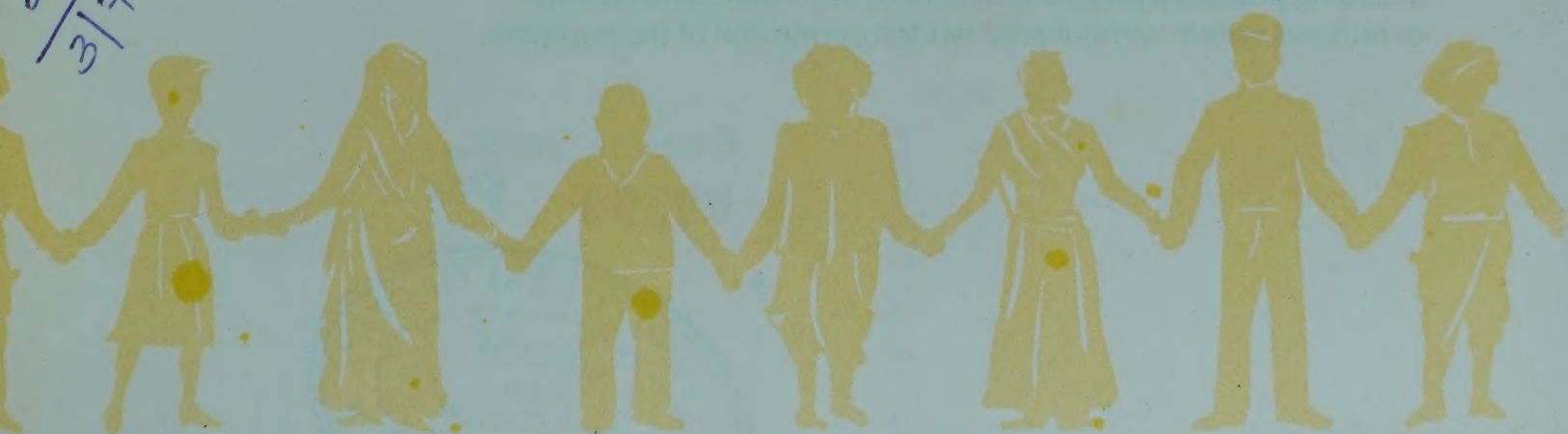


# *Chains of Change*

**Dr. Rajesh Tandon & Anju Dwivedi**

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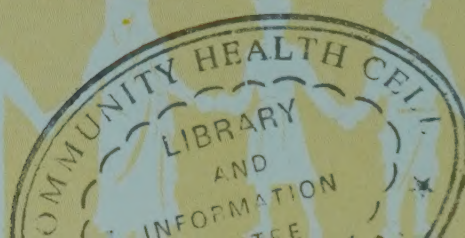
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# Welcome



The process of inquiry into Participatory Training Methodology was carried out in four regions: Uttar Pradesh (U.P), Bihar, Gujarat and Kerala. In each of these regions, a focal point was identified - Indu Kumari (a grassroots organizer in Uttar Pradesh), Ali Imam (a teacher in Bihar), Ahmedabad Study Action Group (a voluntary organisation in Gujarat), Ambujakshan (a dalit leader in Kerala). Conversations with these focal points led to identification of others in the chain of learning through which the process spread from one to another. Hence, the title ***Chains of Change***. Thus the stories in the following pages start from these focal points and trace the journey of learning. Four such chains are documented here. The study was completed before October 2000 when the new states of Uttaranchal and Jharkhand had not come into existence. Therefore, the old maps have been printed so as to avoid confusion to the readers.

The essential process of untangling these ***Chains of Change*** was intensive conversation with individual links in the chains. The conversations explored the learning processes and outcomes of these individuals and their organisations. Once all the conversations were recorded, common threads began to be picked up. The following pages are organised around these strands.

The first section records voices of individuals and organisations in each of the four chains around the central question of Why learn? What prompted these links in the chains to seek out systematic learning opportunities? What did they hope to address by attending a particular training programme? This section explores ***Learning for What and Why?***

The second section explores different outcomes and impacts of learning. It records and presents ways in which ***Learning to Change*** has been applied by different links in each chain. It attempts to paint a picture of such a pattern of changes in the lives and work of individuals and organisations.

How did you learn? ***Ways of learning*** are captured in the third section. It presents the mosaic of methods and tools that were important for learning to these links in each of the chains.

Each of the chains is related to PRIA since Ashok Singh, Ali Imam, Binoy Acharya and G. Placid attended PRIA's Training of Trainers (ToT) programmes. Ashok Singh is the Founder Director of Sahbhagi Shikshan Kendra (SSK), Lucknow. Ali Imam worked closely with Dr. B.K Sinha in 1980s. Dr. B.K. Sinha is the Founder Director of a Patna based organisation called Centre

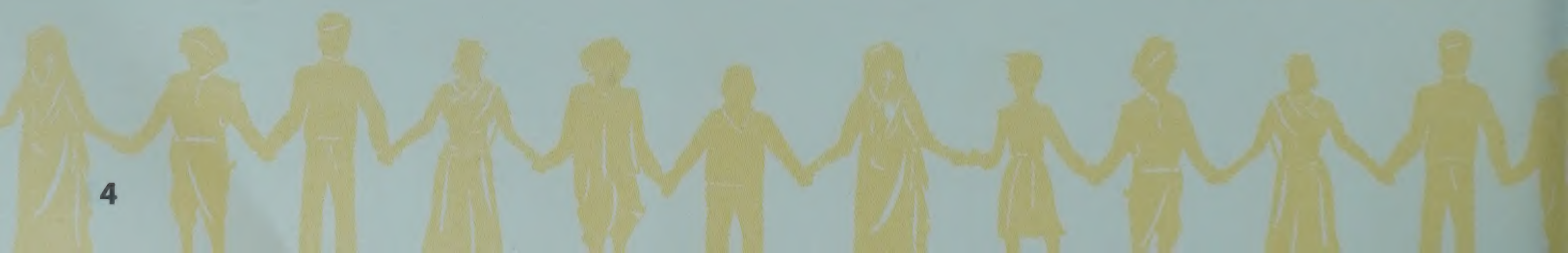




for Communications and Resource Development (CENCORED). Binoy Acharya is Founder Director of Unnati, Ahmedabad. G. Placid is Founder Director of Sahayi, Thiruvanthpuram. SSK, CENCORED, Sahayi and Unnati are part of the Network of Collaborating Regional Support Organisations of PRIA. These organisations have also been conducting training programmes using Participatory Training Methodology (including ToT) in local languages, as they emerged to become RSOs with organic links to PRIA.

The final section in this document attempts to capture the history, concepts and challenges of participatory training. It draws lessons from the ***Chains of Change***, and reflects upon these stories.

We welcome you to this journey of learning!





# Preface



In summer of 1977, in Kherwara block of Udaipur district of Rajasthan in India, I had begun to experiment with participatory learning approaches in strengthening local youth groups of tribals and others at the village level. This process was carried out under the sponsorship of Seva Mandir, a voluntary organisation based in Udaipur. The experience of facilitating individual and collective learning to create strong local institutions of youth and farmers proved to be a significant learning opportunity for me and other colleagues at Seva Mandir. Utilising this experience, I had the privilege to team up with Om Shrivastva, then at Seva Mandir, to innovate a series of training programmes which began to prepare field workers, community organisers, adult educators and rural development practitioners, as change agents in enabling structured learning opportunities for hitherto excluded sections of our society.

This approach was further strengthened through the perspectives of **participatory research** which became the founding framework of PRIA in 1981. The experiences of these training programmes were compiled into a series of publications-Participatory Training for Rural Development (1982) Participatory Training for Adult Educators (1987) being two significant outcomes at that time. Om and I then designed a series of Training of Trainers (ToT) programmes which began in 1984 with a view to prepare trainers in development. These ToTs in the early years became the basis for development of a manual on Participatory Training Methodology. This manual has been translated in nearly twenty languages in India and abroad and became the basis for further elaborating the methodology to promote participatory learning in a wide spectrum of development sectors.

The methodology has since then been adapted, modified and developed to be applied to grass-root level with women leaders and dalits leaders, youth groups and tribal groups, health training workers, rural development practitioners, literacy teachers and a host of other development actors. By late 1980s, the methodology had begun to make in-roads into large-scale government development programmes in fields like social forestry, watershed development, income generation, water and sanitation, community health and basic education.

Twenty years later, PRIA began to convene discussions and consultations with practitioners of participatory training methodology in different regions of the country. The purpose was to assess the contributions of the methodology in bringing about individual and collective learning for social change in the Indian context. These conversations and discussions led to a more intensive process of data gathering. What became obvious in the process was that a significant number of innovations, adaptations and applications had taken place, even though documentation of the same was fragmented or inadequate. A team of four practitioners of participatory





training joined me in studying this further. Anju Dwivedi from PRIA, Harish Vashista from SSK, Hemal Joshi from UNNATI and P.M. Dev from SAHAYI began a process of inquiry into the spread of participatory learning methodology in selective pockets of U.P, Bihar, Gujarat and Kerala. While experiences have spread far and wide, it was felt that a focused approach of inquiry would generate insights which may be more widely applicable as well.

The starting points of the inquiry were the team of practitioners of participatory training themselves. They examined their own learning experiences and then began to explore links with others. In this process, we discovered that change had spread far and wide, but there was a link across these change processes. This link was particularly a human link which extended the process of learning from one event to another, from one person to another. Therefore, this document is an attempt to capture the Chains of Change that participatory training methodology generated in the lives and works of people in different regions of India. During the process of preparing this document, we discovered the wide range of learning materials, exercises, role play and instruments that have been designed, adapted and applied by a host of practitioners of participatory training methodology. The material was so valuable that we decided to compile it and make it available more widely.

Along with this document, therefore, we have two other compendiums. One is the **Book of Readings** on various themes of participatory training methodology. This is intended to serve as reading material for practitioners of participatory training methodology as well as for their use in their own training programmes. P.M. Dev and Harish Vashista have worked on this along with others. The second companion document is on **Methods of Participatory Training**. It is a compilation of a wide spectrum of methods, techniques and variations which have been developed in practice. By putting these together, we hope that their use will spread as well as further innovations and adaptations will take place. Hemal Joshi has worked on this document along with others. Purvi Dass and Anju Dwivedi from PRIA have been anchoring the process. Ashok Singh, Binoy Acharya and G. Placid have provided constant guidance and support.

There are many others who attended the consultations and shared their experiences. These documents should be seen as an outcome of this collective enterprise. I am hopeful that sharing of these materials will result in greater dissemination of the relevance and application of participatory training methodology in transforming the lives of people, communities and organisations in India and abroad.

**Dr. Rajesh Tandon**

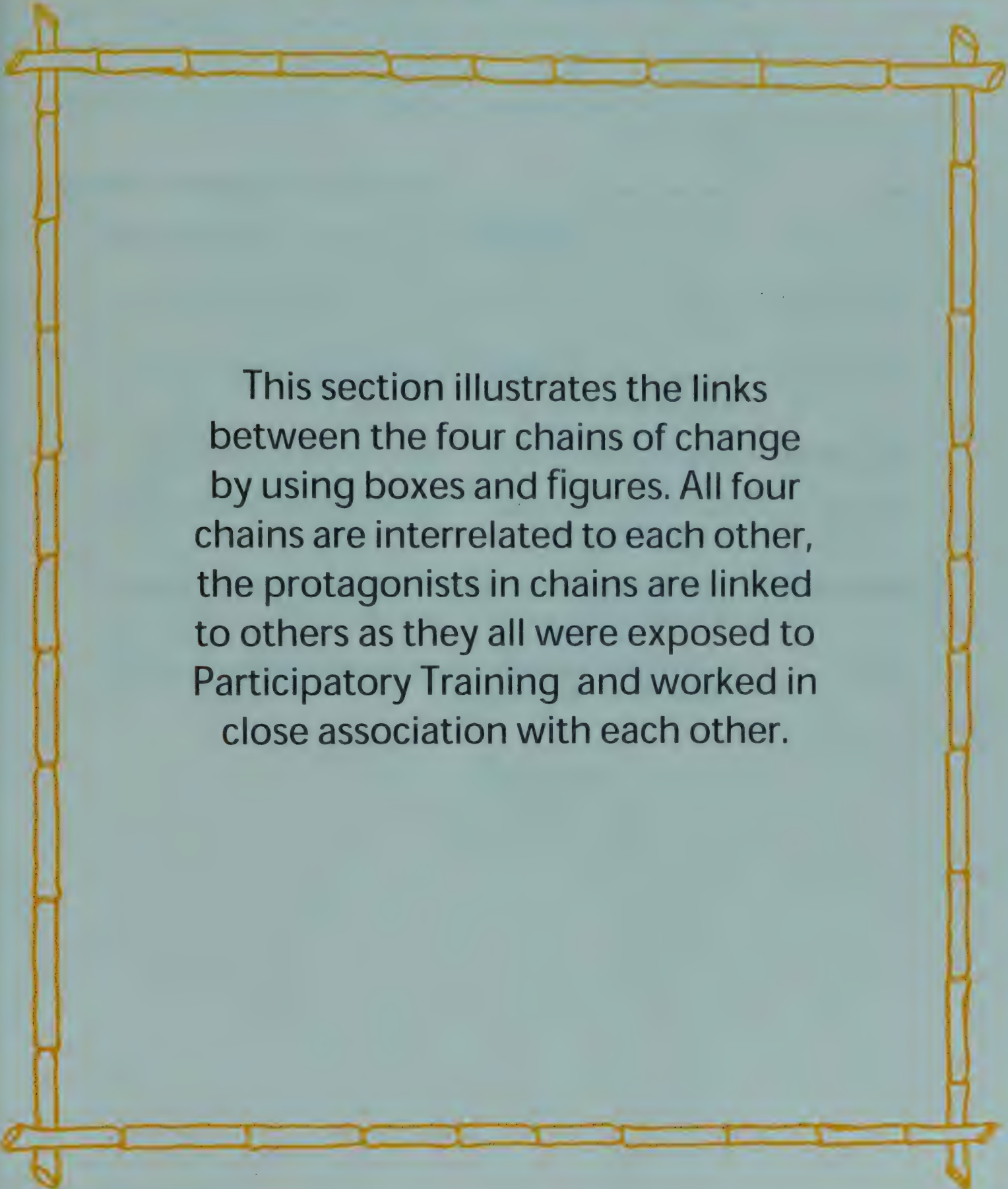
**March 2001**







## *Actors in the chain*



This section illustrates the links between the four chains of change by using boxes and figures. All four chains are interrelated to each other, the protagonists in chains are linked to others as they all were exposed to Participatory Training and worked in close association with each other.

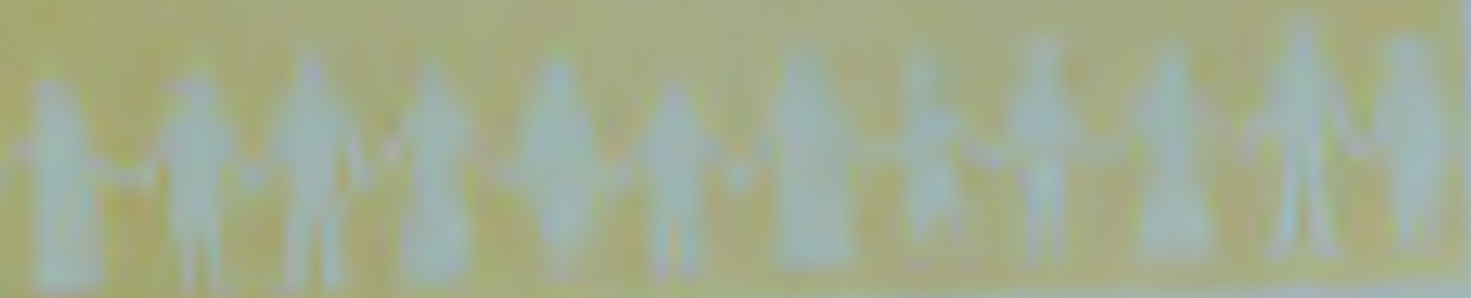
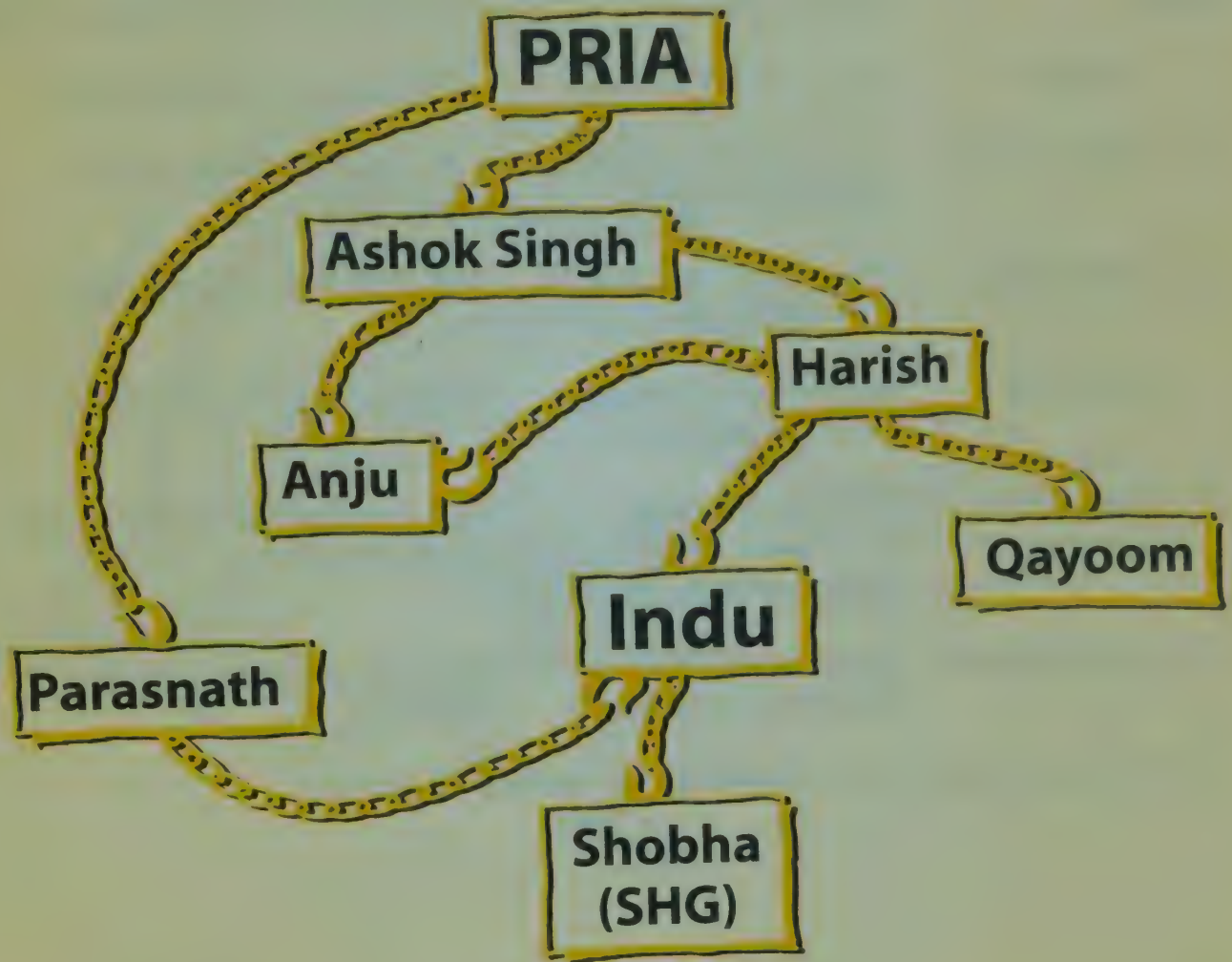
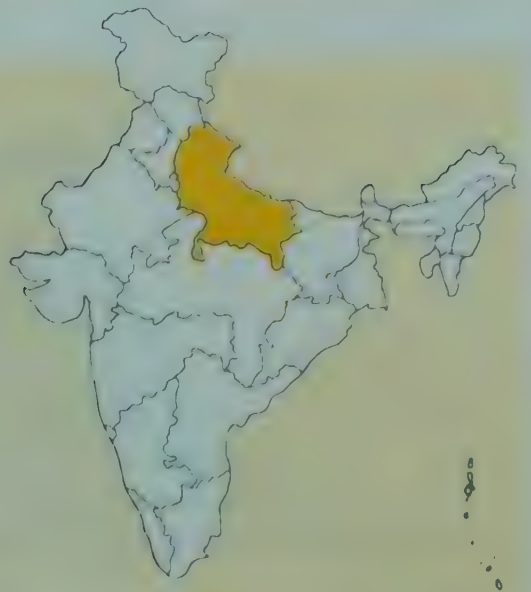


## Uttar Pradesh

In Uttar Pradesh, Indu Kumari is the focal point who is linked to Harish Vashista, Ashok Singh and Anju Dwivedi who have provided her an exposure to Participatory Training. On the other hand she is also linked to Parasnath, who is secretary of the organisation where she is working. Indu in turn is linked to Shobha as she is facilitating Shobha's group in Dumrikhlaq village in Deoria district. The table below shows how Indu's work on the ground has been linked to others who have been involved in the chain of learning as they participated in participatory training.

Name	Present status	Orientation to Participatory Training
1. Ashok Singh	Executive Director, SSK, UP	1988, Training of Trainers from PRIA
2. Harish Vashishta	Programme Co-ordinator, SSK, UP	1995, Training of Trainers, SSK
3. Anju Dwivedi	Programme Co-ordinator, PRIA, New Delhi	1997, Training of Trainers, SSK
4. Abdul Qayoom	Programme Officer, SSK, UP	1998, Training of Trainers, SSK
5. Parasnath	Secretary of Yuva Chetna Kendra, Deoria, UP	1992-93, Training of Trainers, SSK
6. <b>Indu Kumari</b>	Field Organiser, Yuva Chetna Kendra, Deoria, UP	1997, Women Leadership Training programme, SSK
7. Shobha	Leader of Self help group, Dumriikhlaq, Desai block, Deoria District, Uttar Pradesh	



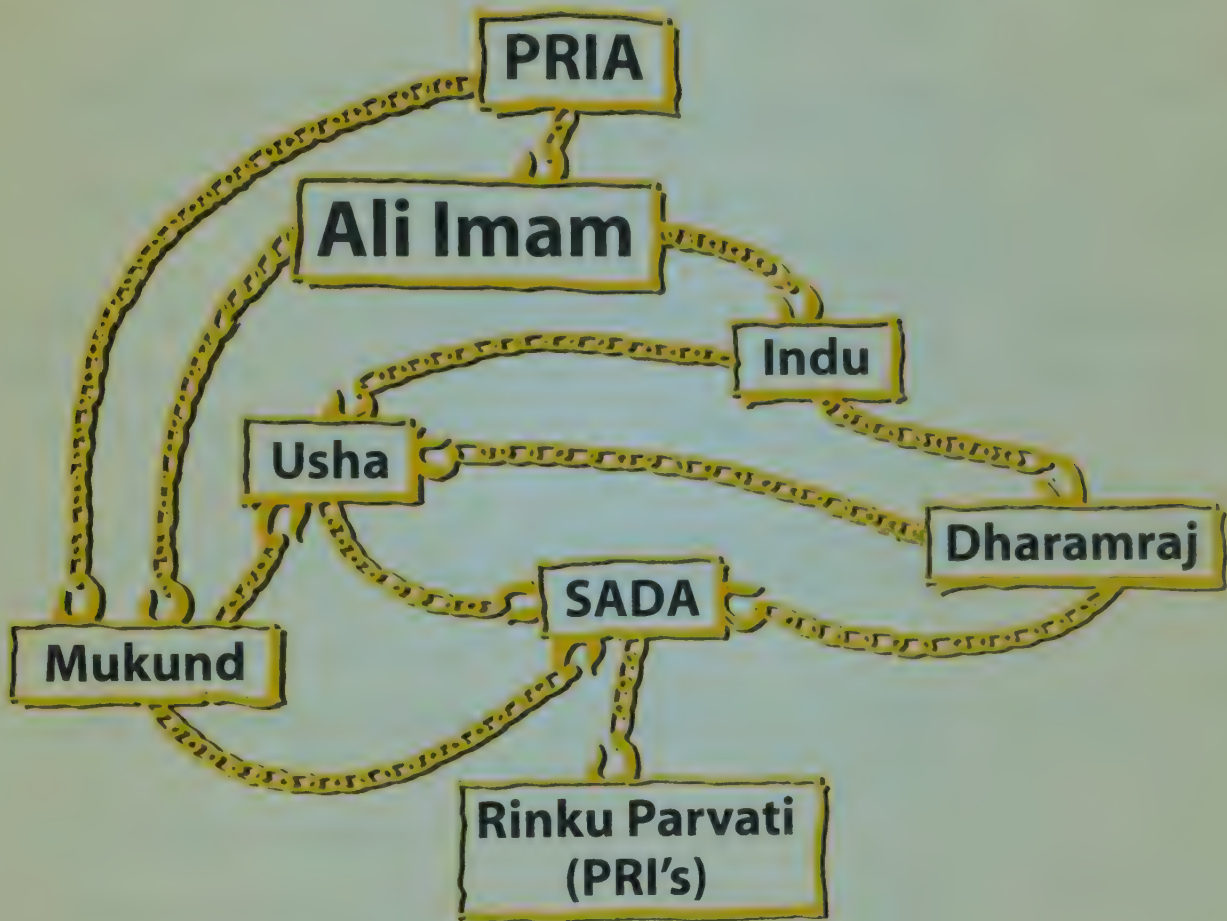
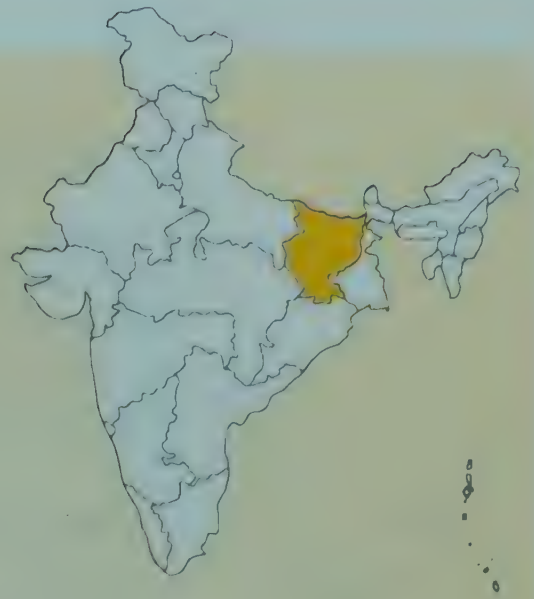


## Bihar

In Bihar, Ali Imam, Principal of District Institute for Education and Training (DIET) has been chosen as a focal point. He is linked to Indu Sinha and Mukund Sinha since all of them were the part of Deepayatan in 1980s. Indu Sinha and Mukund Sinha, are now working in CENCORED with Dharamraj. They have been facilitating Usha's (founder of Usha Silai Prashikshan Sansthan) Ajay's and Mahesh's (field workers of SADA) learning processes. Participatory training orientation for them has enabled them to work with panchayats in Tamolia, Muzzafarpur.

Name	Present status	Orientation to Participatory Training
1. Ali Imam	Principal, DIET, Patna	1988, Training of Trainers, PRIA
2. Mukund Sinha	Programme Co-ordinator, CENCORED, Patna	1986, Adult education training, Deepayatan
3. Dharamraj	Programme Co-ordinator, CENCORED, Patna	1996, Training of Trainers, SSK
4. Indu Sinha	Programme Co-ordinator, CENCORED, Patna	1988, Training of Trainers, PRIA
5. Usha	Director, Usha Silai Prashikshan Sansthan, Bochchan block, Muzaffarpur	1997, Sahayogi Nirman Prashikshan (ToT), CENCORED
6,7. Ajay and Mahesh	Programme Officers, SADA, Bochchan, Muzaffarpur	1996, Microplanning Training, CENCORED
8,9. Rinku and Parvati	Kachchara Panchayat, Tamolia, Muzaffarpur	



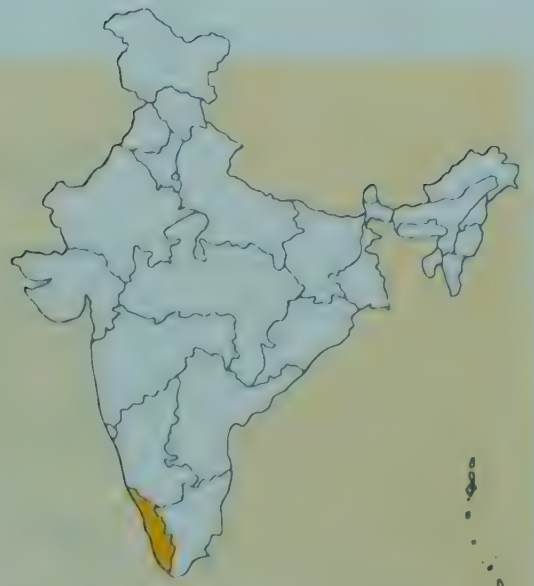


## Kerala

In Kerala, Ambujakshan, leader of Kerala Dalit Panthers is in the central focal point. He is closely associated with G.Placid of Sahayi who first exposed him to Participatory Training Methodology. Like Ambujakshan many other individuals and organisations have been given orientation to Participatory Training Methodology by G.Placid. The figure illustrates the links between G.Placid and other individuals and organisations.

Name	Present status	Orientation to Participatory Training
1. G. Placid	Director, Sahayi, Thiruvananthpuram	1990, Training of Trainers, PRIA
2. P.M.Dev	Programme Co-ordinator, Sahayi, Thiruvananthpuram	1995, Training of Trainers, Sahayi
3. Lilly Pushpam	Training officer, Sahayi, Thiruvananthpuram	1998, Training of Trainers, Sahayi
4. G.Chandrababu	Programme Assistant, Sahayi, Thiruvananthpuram	1996, Training of Trainers, Sahayi
5. Sajeev	Accountant, FREED, Alapuzha	1998, Training of Trainers, Sahayi
6. Kanchana Kotangal	Director, BP Moideen Seva Mandir, Mukoon, Kozhikode	1991, Participatory programme planning and budgeting, Sahayi 1994. Training of Trainers, Sahayi
7. L.Pankajakshan	Director of Santhigram, Thiruvananthpuram	1991, Participatory programme planning, PRIA 1995, Training of Trainers, Sahayi
8. K.C.Thankachan	President of Sandhya Development Society	1993, SHG management, Sahayi and NABARD
9. K.P.Narayan	Founder of Grama Vikasana Samithy, Bedoor, Kasargod	1995, STOT from Sahayi
10. Mercy George	Social worker, Society of Love, Kasaragod,	1995, PRA training from Sahayi 1996, Training of Trainers, Sahayi
11. Ambujakshan	<b>Founder of Kerala Dalit Panther, Kerala</b>	<b>1996, Training of Trainers, Sahayi</b>





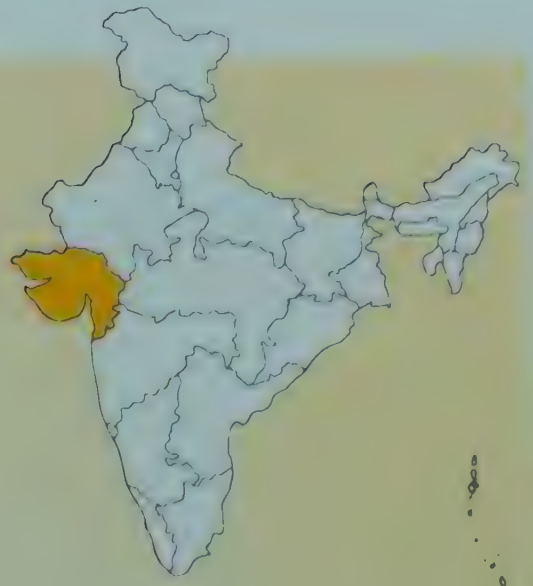


# Gujarat

In Gujarat, the Ahmedabad Study Action Group (ASAG), an organisation is the central link. The organisation is linked to Binoy Acharya of Unnati who was the first person to encourage Bhanubhai (then working in ASAG) to get oriented to Participatory Training Methodology. Binoy has himself attended ToT from PRIA and has then later trained others in the chain. Minaxi from Chetna is also one of PRIA ToT alumni as depicted in the chain.

Name	Present status	Orientation to Participatory Training
1. Binoy Acharya	Director, Unnati, Ahmedabad	1986, Training of Trainers, PRIA
2. Minaxi Shukla	Founder Member, CHETNA, Ahmedabad	1989, Training of Trainers PRIA
3. Hemal Joshi	Senior Programme Associate, Unnati, Ahmedabad	1997, Training of Capacity Building of Trainers, Unnati
4. Jayaben Vaghela	Training Co-ordinator, SEWA, Ahmedabad	1999, Training of Capacity Building of Trainers, Unnati and series of Participatory training, Unnati and SEWA
5. Alka Mehta	Trainer, FWWB, Ahmedabad, Gujarat	1995, Training of Capacity Building of Trainers, Unnati
6. NareshBhai Thakar	Community Organiser, Ahmedabad Study Action Group, Dholka, Ahmedabad	1996-97, Training of Capacity Building of Trainers, Unnati
7. <b>Bhanubhai</b>	Consultant to PRC in Unnati	1987-88, Training of Trainers, PRIA
8. Jalabhai Sanghabhai	Sarpanch, Sarla Village, Bavala Taluka, Ahmedabad	1999, Trainings on PRI, ASAG, Dholka, Ahmedabad
9. Bhurabhai Nagabhai	Ward Sarpanch, Sarla Village, Bavala Taluka, Ahmedabad	1999, Trainings on PRI, ASAG, Dholka, Ahmedabad













# *Learning for what and why*

Why did these individuals and organisations pursue a structured learning opportunity? This section narrates the context in which each link of the chain operates. It explores the relevance attached to learning by each individual or organisation. What learning needs were identified? What goals did they pursue? At what stage of their life and work did they participate in the training programme? What hopes and fears did they have before attending training? It explores the motivations of these individuals and organisations in pursuing their learning.



### Indu

1. I had been asked to participate in the women's leadership programme by my secretary
2. How to organize SHGs ?

### ASAG

1. Evaluation of project highlighted the need for people centered approach.
2. What is marginalisation, oppression and who is marginalised and oppressed ?

### Ali Imam

1. Can adults be treated like school students ?
2. Which model could be applied for adults to learn ?

### Ambujakshan

1. How could the dalits, whom we were working with be empowered?
2. What were the methods to enhance participation of dalit groups to end social injustice?



## **Indu Kumari, Yuva Chetna Kendra, Deoria,UP**

I am a field worker, employed in Yuva Chetna Kendra (YCK), a voluntary organisation based in Deoria district of Uttar Pradesh. I have been active in mobilising women of Dumriiklaq village in Desai block to form self help groups and imparting training to women about the concepts of self-help. I have been working in YCK for more than five years now and enjoy the work that I have been entrusted with. Parasnath, the Secretary of the organisation is very sensitive to the needs of the people in the community and believes in capacity building of the staff to handle the work of mobilising community. He feels that every staff should be given an opportunity to participate in such kinds of programme as they not only build skills but also contribute towards a growth in the personality.

As I was given the responsibility of forming women's groups in the village, our Secretary realised that I needed to undergo a training programme myself to understand the dynamics of groups. Therefore in 1996, I was asked by the Secretary of the organisation to attend the Women's Leadership Training programme at Lucknow, conducted by Sahbhagi Shikshan Kendra. I was not very pleased in the beginning as the programme seemed long, twenty one days away from home and family bothered me. I was not very sure how would I gain from the programme, though the title of the programme sounded interesting.





## Ali Imam, DIET, Patna, Bihar

I am presently working with DIET (Vikram, Patna) as a principal. I have a dual role to play, one as a faculty member for training people and second as a manager of the institution. I feel comfortable more with being a trainer rather than a manager. Prior to DIET, I worked with DEEPAYATAN, which is a state level resource centre on adult education for Bihar. It was the time (1980s) when training was gaining momentum at the national level particularly with adults, and many voices were being heard about participation and participatory training. I was trained as a teacher and had attended a number of other training programmes related to training, adult learning etc.

Somehow I was not very satisfied with the approach as all these trainings were top down, many a time boring and frustrating. I was not very pleased with a model where there was no participation of learners except as passive recipients. I wanted a change but was not very sure how a change could be brought about. Besides, there were no institutions providing new and innovative training opportunities at the state level. That was the time when DEEPAYATAN was also planning to adapt or develop a new methodology of learning and training. PRIA was one such name at the national level, which was known for its work on participation and adult learning. DEEPAYATAN started interacting with PRIA and explored the possibility of a collaboration. In 1988 PRIA announced the ToT at national level and I was nominated to participate in the same.




## Ambujakshan, Kerala Dalit Panther, Kerala

I am the founder of the Kerala Dalit Panthers, a community based organisation in Kerala. I have been always fired by the zeal of liberating my people from centuries old serfdom and helplessness. That is how, as a student I started the people's movement now known as Dalit Panthers. I was very successful in organising the people. They trusted me and the movement was growing, but I felt constrained by the methods I was using. I began to feel uncomfortable with the thought that in educating and mobilising the people, I was using the same kind of dehumanising methods that were used by oppressors.

Moreover, the operational horizon of the organisation was narrow. We were bent on achieving complete political freedom, nothing less and nothing more. The dream that we shared was to end social injustice towards the dalits in Kerala. The dream was very idealistic, but I wanted to know more about the processes to achieve the same. How the dalits could be organised to feel empowered, to raise voices against atrocities were some questions that I needed answers to. I learnt that Sahayi was conducting a programme of Participatory Training which I wanted to attend, since I required inputs on participation of dalit groups. In 1996, I got an opportunity to participate in ToT organised by Sahayi. Subsequently, other group members from Kerala Dalit Panthers also got an opportunity to attend this programme.





## **Bhanubhai, Consultant, Ahmedabad, Gujarat**

ASAG (Ahmedabad Study Action Group) is based in Ahmedabad. The organisation has a team of interventionists who have undergone Unnati's Training of Capacity Building of Trainers (TCBT). This was the group of individuals with a background of architecture and engineering.

I was also a part of this group and worked as a consultant like others in this group to many housing projects in the state, initiated by Kirtibhai Shah in the year 1978. ASAG and Vedchi Pradesh Samiti launched a project of housing for 5000 tribals in Vallore block of Surat district in South Gujarat.

The first phase was launched in 1980-84 followed by a second phase in 1984-87. The evaluation of this project, which was carried out by Binoy Acharya, Director of Unnati, pointed out the need for projects to involve people and be more pro poor. Our group took it very seriously and wanted to know how this could be achieved; it seemed an uphill task. We had no idea at all on participation of the poor in our project. Binoy Acharya suggested mobilising the groups, training them and building their capacities to handle the project. Binoy bhai initiated dialogues on who are the people to be included, long term and short term objectives, and mission of the organisation and its congruence with the social change. We realised that we all required training which would help address our needs. I attended ToT of PRIA and other team members attended TCBT programme of Unnati and by 1997 a team of interventionists was developed in ASAG.



# Learning to change

Does learning result in a visible change in the participatory training programmes? What actions result from the learning process? Each individual and organisation deepened their understanding through the process of facilitated reflection in the participatory training programme. How did this get translated into action?

Learning implies change. Change implies a shift in current patterns of understanding and behaviour. This section explores actions taken through **learning to change** at three levels. Most profound changes occurred at the individual's own level. **Individual action** brought changes in the lives, family and work area of each person in the chain. Some of these actors then took **organisational-action**, to bring about significant changes in the manner in which their organisations function. **Community-action** was the third level of change pursued by many of these actors. They used their learning to transform the collective processes and structures at the local community level at which they were intervening.

Stories in this section describe the actions that took place in each link in the chain after they returned from a participatory training experience.



## 1.0 Individual Action : How did they change themselves?

**Indu Kumari**, narrated : Before attending the women's leadership training programme, I was very bubbly and used to behave like a child. I was very quarrelsome. I would pick fights with my younger brother and usually won. My parents always complained about my lack of seriousness. In the office too, I was the youngest and my behaviour was often considered frivolous. During the Women's Leadership Training Programme, the interactions with trainers and the other women made me realise the necessity to reform my behaviour. I realised that due to my behaviour I was not given major responsibilities in the office. On my return, I felt an urgent need to improve. I am no more quarrelsome, have become more serious. My family members are happy to notice the change in me.' Mr. Paras Nath, YCK's Secretary, reaffirms this change in Indu by mentioning that 'her transformation was enough to make me feel that she could take up more responsibilities in the office. As a result, I put her incharge of the Desai block.'

Narrating his own experience, **Parasnath** continued : 'I was very submissive and people used to take advantage of my situation. I could never say no to anybody. In my family, people used to be irritated with this behaviour. During training, I realised that unless I change my behaviour I should be prepared to suffer. Since the training I have become more assertive and have learnt to say what I think.'

**Ashok Singh** reflected: 'Before the training, I had many questions in my mind and challenged everything and nothing would satisfy me as a learner. In the beginning, since my queries remained unanswered, I was very uncomfortable. Only during my journey through group processes, I realised that some of my anxieties were reduced and I gradually began to get answers to my questions. I started examining myself and realised that the attitude of a person as a trainer is important as it can hinder the process of learning, if not corrected. The strength of participatory training lies in individual transformation and that does not exclude even the trainers. I always use myself as a 'thermometer' to sense all that is going on in the group. This enables me to adapt different methods and designs for the programmes. Realisation of myself has broadened my perspective and made me very analytical, this helps me in my organisation as well as in home. This change has not escaped the attention of my children and wife as well.'

**Abdul Qayoom**, said: 'I felt a transformation of my inner 'self'. The personality theory influenced my life tremendously. My son was born in 1992. I was very aggressive, I used to beat my child, scold him if he was mischievous. He was so frightened of me that for five years he remained aloof from me. He would stop crying whenever he would see me out of fear of being slapped or scolded. I was under the impression that children should be controlled lest they become deviants. However, after having been oriented to sessions on personality, the realisation dawned on me that I had put my son through hell for three years. The formative stage of his life was filled with fear and anxiety. Soon after my return from the programme, I become friendly with my son. I could see that he was very resistant and doubtful in the beginning, but now we both are friends. I take him out regularly and he feels safe and secure with me. Even my wife has noticed these changes in me; I was very dominating earlier and I would ensure that I won all arguments but now I give her space and listen to her viewpoints. I can say that my family life has certainly become better than what it was earlier.'






**Ali Imam** reflected: 'Participatory training has become my way of life. I was very much influenced by the philosophy that focused on change of attitude and behaviour of the learners. This philosophy also emphasised on participation in the real sense. I began to use the experiential learning methods in the trainings that I conducted thereafter.'

**Dharamraj** shared an incident when he and his team had to take a session based on the role-play method. 'We had thought that we were going on the right track, the reaction of the group made us realise that we were insensitive towards women. Since then, I have tried to be more sensitive towards the feelings of others, particularly of women.'

**Mukund Sinha** reflected: 'I had a very dominating nature earlier. I would scold my daughters and wife on very minor matters. But after going through a process in training which made me realise that this behaviour was detrimental for the growth of children, I began to regret it. I have become soft-spoken and more tolerant now.'





**Ambujakshan** felt : that the participatory training exposure brought about a remarkable attitudinal change in him. He said : 'I began to look upon co-workers as equals - became more of a democratic leader, who recognises each one's individuality and talents and promotes the participation of the entire team. Previously I was dictatorial in nature, now I have started involving the others in the decision making process. This led to the development of capacities, especially in the areas of organising, conflict resolution, organisational management etc. I was able to facilitate training more effectively. I became more open and broad-minded. This was due to the resolution of conflicts in my own mind. Understanding social realities led to the resolution of conflicts. I also began to realise that social transformation is possible only with the involvement and co-operation of the stakeholders.'

**G. Chandrababu** shared : that exposure to the training programme helped him to grow and develop as an individual through insights into the nature, structure and dynamics etc. of the mind. 'I got opportunities for authentic self-expression/communication leading to self-confidence and creativity. What helped me especially were the honest and well-meant observations and comments of the co-trainees. Though initially they were a bit painful, group acceptance helped me become more integrated, and accepting of my limitations and shortcomings.' In this context he clearly remembers a couple of incidents during the trainings. One such instance was regarding the observation by the participants that Chandrababu, while taking class or making a point often used to point his index finger at the audience. This came out clearly during the video review.

'Even during my B.Ed course nobody had made this observation. This helped me correct some of my mannerisms and become more effective in communication. Training experiences also helped me to face some of the problems in my family/married life. Mine was a love marriage, approved neither by my family nor the family of the girl. The problem was that the girl belonged to the Christian religion, while I was a Hindu. With newly gained confidence, understanding and patience, I took the initiative to bring the two families together. In one such meeting an elderly member of my family asked: 'We want to know where you will go, to the temple or to the church'. If it were before the ToT experience, I would have in my typical manner shot back: that is none of your business and walked out. But I had undergone a transformation. I have become confident, listening, understanding, co-operative, sensitive of others sentiments. So I paused for some time and coolly said-' This matter can be settled peacefully, amicably'. The suave manner won the relatives and finally the families came together. The main point to remember is that the drilling I got in listening and appropriately responding during the 21 days of training had effected positive personality changes in me. This helped me to maintain my composure during times of strain, like when I had to undergo a bone removal operation, which left me handicapped.'


**Sajeev** shared : 'The training experience was instrumental in cementing the solidarity and togetherness in my family. Inspired by the experience, I suggested that all family members have breakfast together and talk. This was an innovation, since previously each one ate at his/her own convenient time in silence. The experiment proved to be very productive,



as the members of the family started exchanging pleasantries, sharing news and views etc. Previously the family atmosphere was very serious. Now people started cracking jokes, laughing.' Listening to the interesting and transforming experiences of training and seeing the change in him, his young wife pleaded : 'Take me also to the training next time'.

Sajeev also felt that he was able to conduct more productive sessions on financial management, accounting and bookkeeping etc. for the benefit of the leaders and members of the self help groups. 'I observed several changes in the members of the women's SHGs after my training exposure. The change in myself had mediated changes in the women. I was more relaxed and friendly while communicating with them. Previously I used to get impatient and angry if the participating women did not follow my points. The women were fearful of the demanding "teacher", always tense and reticent. The training experience made me more understanding of the poor rural women. Instead of getting angry and scolding I used to smile at their mistakes and repeat the points. The women began to be more attentive and communicative. The learning became enjoyable and effective. Previously the SHG women were aloof when they came to the office. Later, seeing the cordial attitude of the accountant, they began to talk and discuss their problems. This injected a new dynamism into the SHG movement.' Sajeev says his involvement in the organisation became meaningful social work only after participatory training. Earlier it was a matter of formal duty. Now it became socially productive and personally fulfilling. It acquired a new dimension of depth. He added, 'Previously I was averse to training. As I had told another member of the staff "It is a waste of time" but after this personal exposure to participatory training, I have started appreciating training. I am eager to attend the second phase of training of trainers, which I had missed because of urgent work at that time'.

**Kanchana Kottangal** reported : 'Holistic approach and improved methods of social work brought several benefits to the rural communities, particularly to women. A lot of work was done among estranged couples. One such example was about a couple that was estranged in 1995. In the family court, set up by the government, they were declared divorced. The main reason was the cruelty of the drunken husband. The organisation started counselling both the parties. The woman was given a job in the crèche by the organisation. After a year of counselling the husband came to the centre (crèche) to see his daughter. The daughter was at first scared of the father. Subsequently she became friendly. Eventually he met the estranged wife and they got reconciled and started living together. The families were opposed to their reconciliation. But the counselling by my team and me made them change their attitude. The approach of the family court was legal but formal with little consideration for the human elements. The social workers led by me took a humanistic approach. This was possible because they had been influenced by Sahayi. Before the training, I had a very rigid personality. It would have been impossible even to think of me venturing into a counselling situation. The participatory training experience has worked wonders. Having understood and accepted myself, it is now possible for me to understand and accept others for what they are. It was difficult for me to have a personal dialogue with men. I did not trust them. Through a series of experiences mediated by exercises like the trust walk, role plays, I overcame inhibitions and prejudices - this new freedom led to a deeper involvement with other people.'



**Nareshbhai Thakar** shared: 'Never in my life had I realised that I used to speak so much. Only during participation in training, when I saw the video of an exercise on communication and participation, I realised that I spoke 12 times in the discussion and did not allow any of the other group members to speak. A girl, who was denied an opportunity to speak even once, wept bitterly. I felt very bad about her. Now, I ensure that everybody is listened to, I have learnt to resist my temptation to speak too much.'

**Hemal Joshi** felt : 'she could become more assertive as compared to what she was before going through the participatory training. She said: 'Structured experiences on reflection of self revealed that I had got very little time to enjoy my adolescence as I was drawn into family chores from early childhood. I also realised that I was very submissive. These revelations made me conscious of a need to bring about a change in my personality and outlook. I feel I have brought changes in my own personality, I have become more conscious about others too. During sessions, whenever I find any submissive participant, I make an extra effort to give him/her attention.'

**Binoy Acharya** shared: 'After attending participatory training of trainers, I developed a firm commitment to the methodology. I realised that the philosophy of participation could be applied in other fields as well, and therefore I began to use it in research and evaluations. I believed that participatory training helps in understanding reality.'

**Alka Mehta** reflected: 'After going through training, I felt a change in my personality. I began to give importance to the learners. I realised nobody can be completely ignorant, even the people whom we are working for cannot be treated as devoid of any experiences. I have outgrown the image of 'Sarvguna Sampann' that I had about myself'.



## 2.0 Organisational action: Did change oriented action occur beyond the self into the organisation ?

**Parasnath** shared : 'After coming from training, I understood the importance of opening up in front of others and followed the same principle in the organisation and place of work. My work became more transparent in the organisation and in the community, this has helped in building trust. My colleagues know how much salary each one of us gets. All files are accessible to every staff member in YCK. My community knows how much support in terms of money is available to YCK and how much salary is offered to the staff. Secondly, I realised the importance of training in capacity building of the staff. I feel that participatory training does trigger off other processes which are vital for the growth of an individual. A sensitised and awakened individual is an asset to any organisation that is committed to social change.'

**Ashok Singh** narrated : 'When I was at VIKSAT Gujarat, I attended participatory training of trainers that changed my whole perspective. On my return to the organisation, I discussed the training programme with everybody and felt that this kind of training has great relevance and therefore should be conducted for our organisation. Our director asked me to prepare a proposal for training the staff of VIKSAT and CEE. I tried to convince the staff in the organisation and though everybody sympathised with my bubbling enthusiasm but remained unsympathetic to the content and philosophy of participatory training. It took me a long time to convince them about my idea and finally we organised a training programme for our staff. The staff development training in VIKSAT was very successful and expectations in the organisation were raised. Subsequently, other trainings/ programmes in the organisation were made participatory.'

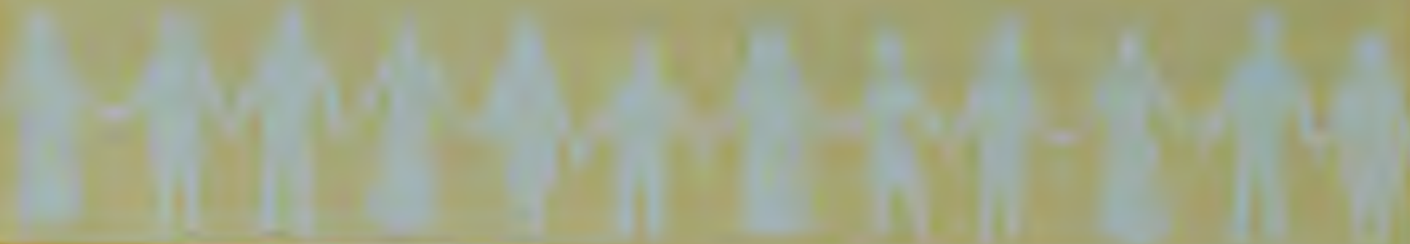
**Harish Vashista** said: 'The changes brought in the organisation are not as significant as those the chief executives can bring. But small efforts at my level are tried. Initially I was very task oriented, I was keen on making weekly plans and sticking to those plans. I would make constant check ups and would ask my team to narrate what they all did and what they could not, with reasons. After attending participatory training, I myself began to look for answers about why the person was performing or not performing. I also tried to analyse the context and situation. I began to respect everybody in the team. This helped in building trust and acceptance by the colleagues which eventually led to the development of a better team. I also analysed the behaviour of the members in the groups and other group processes taking place. I paid more attention to the process part in the training reports. I feel content alone does not make any training successful, the processes are equally important. Therefore, in the reports, the process parts should be highlighted. How can one exclude learning games, exercises and songs from 'content loaded' training such as these for financial management and process documentation?'





**Usha** in Bochchan block of Muzzafarpur district offers vocational training to women to make them economically self-sufficient. The organisation came in contact with CENCORED and attended a training programme that included participatory methods. Usha shared, 'On exposure to participatory training and the issues of empowerment, I realised that I was not doing enough, women needed to be empowered fully, economic self-sufficiency alone could not contribute to empowerment.

I began to widen the outlook of the organisation. I began to organise women, started non-formal education centres, SHGs, awareness of women and adolescent girls on panchayats. This strategy seems to have worked, as the women of the villages have begun to voice their demands about facilities and services that are required in the village.'





**Ambujakshan** reflected how change in vision led to positive changes in organisational policy. 'The organisation (Kerala Dalit Panthers) began to give greater attention to qualitative aspects. The vision and mission of the organisation were revised. This led to greater clarity, depth and breadth of vision. The background became broader and more complex. Previously the vision was centred around ending of social injustice (against the dalits). It was a rather vague dream. The goal was somewhat clear. But there was no clarity regarding the process. After participatory training, the process became clearer. To end injustice, the victims of injustice must be empowered. Social change is not a mechanical affair. The individuals have to awaken and start taking decisions. They need to be empowered. This realisation by the members of the organisation led to greater organisational efficacy. The organisation began to pay attention to the capacity development of its members. This further led to greater enthusiasm and vitality within the organisation.'

**L. Pankajakshan** said: 'After the training, many changes came about in the organisation. It began to be more democratic, transparent, accountable and systematic. Previously there were no clear-cut norms about membership. Anybody who agreed with the objectives of the organisation could be a member. After the training, the group sat together to clarify its vision, mission, strategies, objectives, programmes etc. and worked out a membership pattern and criteria, thus limiting and focusing membership and attaching responsibilities to membership. After exposure to participatory training, I changed the structure and decentralised the organisation. It became democratic and participatory. Training was imparted to the other members of the group and the administrative system was streamlined with regular reporting, systematic accounting, etc. The Sahayi participatory training exposure enabled me to practice Participatory Strategic Planning very effectively. It was also the basis for undertaking innovative ventures like organising the entire panchayat community against the thermal power plant and winning in the struggle, conducting a parallel grama sabha etc.'

**KC Thankachan** narrated : 'After being exposed to participatory training, I embarked upon a mission of organisational transformation and developmental innovations. As a result, Sandhya Arts and Sports club metamorphosed into a fully functioning voluntary development organisation with a new name- Sandhya Development Society with a clear vision, relevant mission and appropriate strategies. Under this banner, our team began to strike out new paths and avenues of constructive development work. Thus were started a whole series of activities, including women's self help groups, women's restaurant, catering units, bakery, production and ayurvedic products and alternate rural banking services managed by women. I feel that nothing short of a mini-revolution happened in my social and organisational vision, I saw immense possibilities of social action. My idea of social involvement previously revolved around sports and arts and some marginal charity work. The participatory training experience opened my eyes I began understanding the deeper dimensions of economic and social development and became convinced that participatory methods are the best tools for catalysing the process of integrated and sustainable development.'



**Minaxi Shukla** narrated : 'After attending training, I started making conscious efforts to develop systematic training designs for the programmes that CHETNA takes up by identifying training needs. This, however, does not mean that we were earlier not engaged in making training designs, but a more systematic approach was followed with proper sequencing. We began to look at minute details of designs, such as which sessions should be conducted in the first half and which in the second half, which methods to adopt and why?'

**Bhanubhai** reflected : 'I had attended training as it was the demand of the time. The evaluation findings of the project that I was co-ordinating indicated towards participation of people. I had no clear-cut understanding of words like underprivileged and mobilisation. During training, after having gone through the Pedagogy of the Oppressed, I understood the meaning of oppression, marginalisation and underprivileged. The processes during the training helped in building an understanding of involving people in analysing situations and the reflection process and, appreciating their knowledge. This understanding enabled me to change the organisation's strategy to work with people. The project-led approach was transformed into a people led approach. Our training included people's participation. Expectations from the learners gave the participants an opportunity to say and decide what they wanted to learn, an opportunity they had been denied. In the organisation, we opted for decentralisation of programmes. Antyodaya Women's Sangh (SHG) is the outcome of these efforts. This gave a new direction to the organisation and we began to train SHG leaders. Care was taken to weave a pro-poor approach and gender justice in the training design.'





### 3.0 Community action : Many Individuals used their learning to enhance community action

**Shobha** is the leader of Laxmi Bachat Samooh, a self-help group in Dumriikhlaq village in Desai block of Deoria District. This particular group is two years old and was facilitated primarily by Indu of Yuva Chetna Kendra, an organisation based at Deoria. Like this group, other self-help groups are formed in other villages of Deoria. In the village, the women convene meetings, collect money from the members of the group and give loans to the needy in the village. Shobha and other women recalled that initially they were not sure what shape these groups would take and how they would convince their family members about the objectives of the Laxmi Bachat Samooh. They were discouraged in the beginning by their husbands and family members who considered the meetings to be a waste of time. However, the women felt grateful to Yuva Chetna Kendra's efforts, particularly of Indu's constant visits to the villages and interactions with the women and family members that helped keep the motivation and enthusiasm alive. Interactive sessions on empowerment of women and the SHG concept were an essential part of meetings that influenced women in the villages.

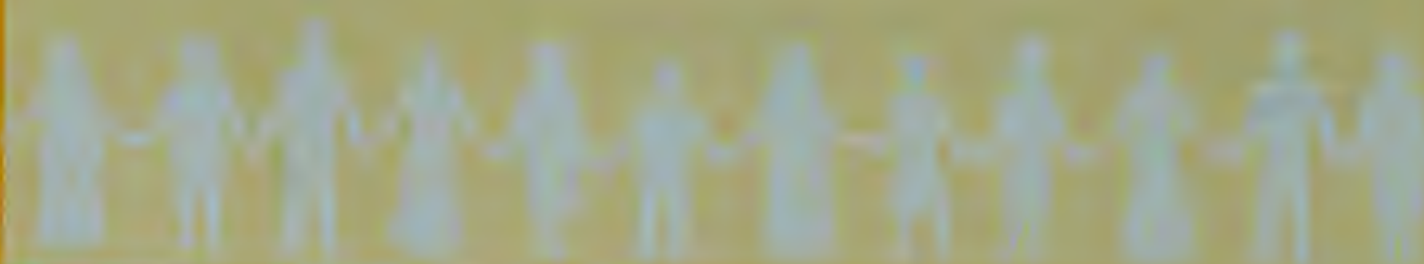
In two years, they feel that they have gained confidence to overcome any problems relating to their group and themselves. Shobha said that the husbands were always curious to know what was happening in the groups and were keen on participating in place of their wives. Shobha and other women banned their entry in the groups and asked them to participate only on one condition, that they wear saris. Women proudly declare that this strategy has worked and men no longer try to attend the group meetings. Laxmi Bachat Samooh wanted to utilise public land in the village for its meetings. They had requested gram pradhan (village head man) to give the land to them since there was no panchayat ghar or a school to hold the meetings. The gram pradhan however wanted to donate the land to some influential person in the village. This annoyed the women. They conducted a campaign against this injustice. They gathered together with sticks and drove the officer responsible for measurement of the land out of the village. The land is still lying unutilised and the women are sure that their ongoing struggle will help them to acquire the land. The officer is scared to enter any village that has organised help groups. These groups of women participated in a convention organised by YCK on 31st March. The villagers made all the arrangements, women from far off places participated, stayed together, shared experiences, exchanged gifts with each other. They came on stage and made presentations. The audience appreciated this, particularly the men in the community who were very surprised at the enthusiasm of women. Women on stage, sharing their ideas so confidently, caught everybody's attention.





**Rinku** and **Parvati** are from the village Tamolia in Kachhara panchayat of Bochahan block in Muzaffarpur in North Bihar. Both are studying in class six, while two other girls, Basanti and Chanda are studying in class eight. All these adolescent girls are the members of kishori panchayat formed by SADA. SADA is an organisation that has been closely linked with CENCORED, Patna for almost eight years. Mukund Sinha and Dr. BK Sinha of CENCORED have been associated with adult education with Ali Imam.

These adolescent girls are involved in awareness raising among the parents and women of neighbouring villages. Besides, they are actively involved in non formal education for girls who drop out from school. These adolescent girls (kishoris) visit their neighbouring villages to motivate the community to send children to schools and non formal education centres. The kishoris were not very enthusiastic in the beginning as the parents and other elders were not encouraging. SADA members put in enormous efforts in the community to build trust. They mobilised people and the adolescent girls in the community to come forward and take initiative in sensitising panchayats about their rights and obligations. This would be one step taken forward to prepare young girls for future leadership roles in panchayat. The SADA team had attended a participatory training programme for development workers facilitated by CENCORED in 1998 as well as many other training programmes on panchayati raj. They then organised programmes for the villagers on their own. Initially it was difficult, but through many meetings and group discussions in the community they could motivate the adults. They realised that in today's context it is important for the women to come out of their homes to play a constructive role in panchayats. These kishori groups mobilised other young girls to join the group and played an important role in facilitating self-help groups of women in the villages. Rinku feels that these initiatives have resulted in increased confidence and mobility outside the village.







**Kerala Dalit Panthers**, a community - based organisation, underwent changes after the team of dalit leaders were oriented to participatory training methodology. Changes in the organisation led to significant developments in the dalit community. The new knowledge of the organisation was shared with the members of the community, as a result of which the people shared their own vision and priority for the organisation. The broadening of vision and strategies attracted increasing number of dalit men and women into the fold of the movement, which gained immense popularity. As a result "we could get the intellectuals into the movement.", said Ambujakshan. Like-minded groups and individuals joined as associates. The spurt of new found enthusiasm led to the formation of new alliances and networks, which include organisations like the Confederation of Human Rights Organisations Kerala (CHRO). Ambujakshan subsequently became its secretary.

To meet the emergent needs of the community and the organisation, a new line of leadership was required. This leadership slowly emerged from the ranks of the people. It was a shared, democratic leadership. Among the youngsters, who rose up to the ranks of central leadership were persons such as Sasi Pandalam, Ramesh Nanmada, Girish Kottayam, Hari Edavanakkad. All of these were well educated and energetic youth who were attracted to the inspiring new orientation of the movement. The leadership became more and more transparent, everybody was informed of everything. The growing number of leaders naturally generated multiplicity of views and ideological differences and conflicts. But with the tool of participatory group management the issues were tackled and the conflicts resolved through an increasing number of group discussions. These changes also attracted the increasing presence and participation of women, who were given proportionate representation in all the committees. Women's leadership has developed considerably. Women found a venue for self-expression in the reformed organisation. The movement started becoming more gender sensitive. Today women are a force to reckon with in the organisation. There are several programmes for them and by them. From a purely agitational style of functioning, the organisation grew into a movement for addressing human and developmental issues of the community. This was reflected, among other things, in the formation of another organisation called 'Janatha Development Society' (JDS) with the aim of promoting the integrated development of the indigenous people. It dawned on the group that along with the struggle for ultimate political power, the survival needs of the people also need to be met. This led to the development of programmes such as women's self help groups (SHGs), remedial education for the school and college students, etc.



**Bhurabhai Nagabhai**, ward Sarpanch and **Jalabhai Sanghabhai**, Sarpanch of Sarala village, Bavala taluka had attended the entire series of training of Panchayati Raj organised by ASAG, Dholka, Gujarat. They reported: 'We learnt how to make a budget for the Panchayats. Earlier we never called people to the Gram Sabha (meeting of villagers). The budget was made by Talati (panchayat secretary) as we were ignorant. When we went to attend the training organised by ASAG, we learnt how the budgets were prepared, how the records for income and expenditure were maintained. I went to visit a panchayat that had received Best Panchayat Award. We were exposed to different ways in which the panchayat could earn income. After coming back from the training, we introduced tax of Rs. 2/-, 5/- and 10/- on the hawkers/ sellers, who came in the village to sell anything. By levying the tax, we could collect Rs. 800/-, which was utilised for putting up street lights in the village.'

We have realised the importance of gram sabhas, therefore we made concerted efforts to bring people to the meetings. Gradually the villagers, particularly women were sensitised to the importance of participating in the meetings. They became aware of their roles and responsibilities and this led to a reduction in the exploitation by the government officials. Sarla village was sanctioned a water bore in 1997-98. The Jal Bhuvan, Water and Irrigation Department staff asked us to identify the ring to dig the bore, we arranged the contractor to do the same. They asked us to go to the Executive Engineer of Surendranagar district who was supposed to sanction the pump. The Executive Engineer asked us to use only the government ring and refused the sanction if a private ring was hired. Before we could decide, the period was already over and the engineer refused to give grant. I spoke about this in a meeting and people, especially women decided to protest. The protest marches yielded results and we got back the water bore in our village.'





# *Ways of learning*

Different methods and techniques have been evolved and utilized in participatory training methodology. All these focus on the process of learning. What was important for learners ? How did they learn ? What methods and processes maintained their interest in and commitment to learning ? The stories in this section speak about the experiences of different people involved in these training programmes.

**Indu** said: 'The process of Women's leadership training was so absorbing that twenty one days passed in no time. The whole atmosphere was very conducive to learning, it involved each participant irrespective of the fact that many women were semi literate and had never been encouraged to read and write. The sessions were highly interactive and moved with the pace of participants' learning abilities. Many assignments were given in groups. The trainer's constant encouragement to the women participants, applause over their presentations and assignments helped build the confidence of the women participants. We, as women, are not recognised for our contributions. There are very few women in rural families who are encouraged to study. In the long years of existence, not a single word of praise comes from society. A big applause for a small effort can really inspire confidence in people. A person like me, who was hesitant and shy was totally transformed. What really moved me was the presence of the woman trainer in the campus throughout the training. This helped me to develop a relationship that was difficult to fathom. Gradually her style, composure, behaviour began to affect me. I learnt that the experiences of other participants were not very different from mine. I realised that we all belong to the same gender which provides a similarity in some aspects of our lives. We used to share our stories with each other and learnt a lot in the process. The women were totally immersed in the programme, so much so that they were not reminded of home and children.

The programme demystified certain beliefs that women can not attend long residential programmes. Society keeps undermining our capacities. I feel that the programmes that involve the people, appreciate their experiences and leanings and move with their pace of learning are very important. In the SHG training that we conduct for women, I ensure that they own the process. I make every effort to involve them in analysing their situations and problems. The women in SHGs also feel that they have to co-ordinate meetings in the long run and make the groups sustainable. Therefore their active participation is a must. Some of the women have overcome their inhibitions and now openly participate in meetings. The SHG formation and management for the village women were organised at night, when women were at home and had finished their domestic chores. The training was done in the form of group meetings, where women were asked to sit in semi -circles and discuss the concept of group formation. Initially the whole concept, its advantages were explained to them and then they were asked to discuss and analyse their own context vis a vis the SHG functioning.'

**Shobha** said: 'When I used to sit in groups with other women, I realised the enormous strength that we collectively had. This realisation always helped me in deriving strength to face challenges of society. The meetings of women were not just restricted to discussions about SHG, but transcended to other matters related to the development of village.'

**Ashok Singh** expressed : 'Participatory training not only helps in increasing knowledge but focuses on attitudinal change and skill development. The apprenticeship modules in the training give an opportunity to participants to practice what they have learnt. I feel I have tremendously benefited from this module as I got an opportunity to work with the trainers. This helped me to look at minute matters related to training. The skill



building part was an essential component of participatory training. In fact, the focus on knowledge, attitude and skill building is a unique feature of participatory training. I have developed a greater understanding on debriefing the entire experiential cycle. I get very annoyed if I see trainers unable to debrief properly. I feel nobody has the right to arouse emotions of people if they lack skills to douse those emotions which are likely to engulf the persons totally in their smouldering flames.'

**Anju Dwivedi** shared: 'The focus on experiential learning is a very important feature of participatory training. Use of various methods and ability of trainers to put participants through experiences and then processing, analysing those experiences collectively is praiseworthy. An essential skill that is required of a trainer is the ability to debrief properly. During my practice session, I took great care to debrief my session properly. This was very much appreciated. I was very impressed with the trainers sharp mental ability to innovate and create experiences on the spot. Other than that, the learning environment plays a meaningful role in building cohesiveness in the group. The environment includes the physical as well as the emotional and psychological aspects. The group which stays together, goes through an emotional journey together becomes more cohesive. I cannot forget the names of the participants who were with me during ToT. One tends to share a relationship that is close and dear. One feels encouraged to assimilate one's own weaknesses in an environment that is non-threatening.

During the women's leadership training that I had conducted for women workers of VDOs, I was moved by the women's involvement. The women learnt when their experiences were valued. Acceptance of their views and appreciation instilled enormous confidence in them. I still remember one of the participants from Urmul who was middle aged, had studied until the eighth standard and suffered from an inferiority complex. We used to give some assignments to the women participants to write in the evenings. She was very hesitant in the beginning, but constant encouragement from us made her write the assignments. I used to see those assignments in the evening and I found that she could write very well. At the end of the training programme, she was rated excellent and was awarded a certificate. She cried with joy at being acknowledged for her brilliant performance. She said- I have never been encouraged in my whole lifetime, nobody has appreciated my work. This is the only opportunity that has given me confidence in myself. Many leaders from organisations met us and sent letters indicating a change in women participants. Some of the participants continued sending letters to me, every letter spoke of confidence and positive aspects of their attitudes, belief in themselves.'






**Ali Imam** said : 'Being an educationist by profession I was engaged in teaching and had conducted many trainings myself. I somehow realised that we were thrusting our agenda on the people. I was very uncomfortable with the approach but did not know how to change it to include learners in the process. Moreover training was seen as a process to provide knowledge to the people; hardly any efforts were made to bring behavioral changes in the people. After getting an exposure to participatory training, I realised that this was the approach that I was looking for. The approach, which encompassed participation, change of self, relationship between the learner and the facilitator, practices that were similar to Sufi traditions, influenced me greatly. I was very pleased with the way the trainers themselves behaved. Their facilitation skills of encouraging people to speak and feel a part of the group were splendid. I remember, as a participant in training, I was very hesitant to speak in English and the medium of instruction of the programme was English. Once the facilitator called me and asked me about my hesitation in articulating despite rich experiences in adult education. When I told him the reason, he smiled and said-'You speak good English, do not refrain yourself from sharing'. I was very moved with this gesture and it has left a mark in my memory. Even today whenever an opportunity presents itself, I do not think twice about speaking. During the training, I also realised that the trainers' behaviour and style become a role model for others.'

**Dharamraj** reflected: 'I had been involved in training the staff of voluntary development organisations, cultural groups in the areas of interpersonal and mass communication. The involvement was restricted to activities, involving them in games, role-plays etc. Participating in training made me realise that involvement means acknowledging their knowledge and experiences. The participants' views on designing the programme are also equally important.'

**Mukund Sinha** shared: 'Participation of learners is the unique feature of this training. Counting heads, keeping track of number of times a particular person spoke is not participation. In reality it entails a broader framework that emphasises appreciating people's experiences in designing the- programme as well. I had an experience of organising training for various departments in the government. The modules were age old and treated every region as homogeneous. There was no consideration for varying regional perspectives and needs of the people. Having been exposed to participatory training, I realised the importance of the philosophy that advocates designing a training programme around the needs of the people. Trainer's preparation, his roles and behaviour are very important in participatory training.'

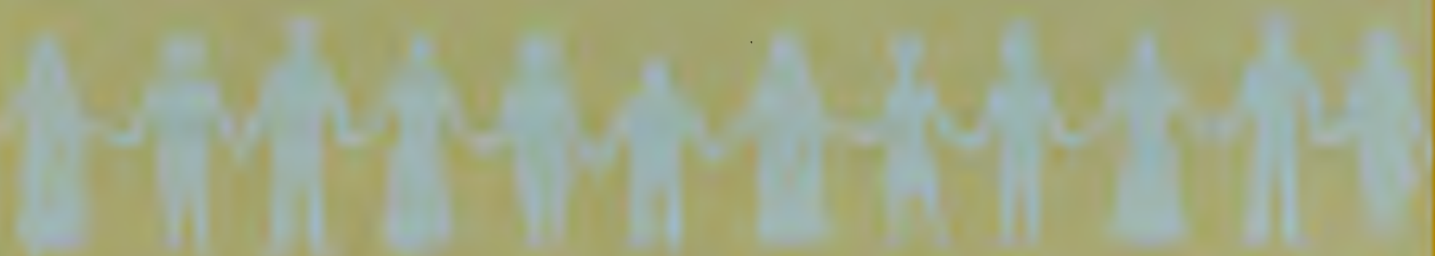
**Indu Sinha** said: 'During the training, I observed that trainers were very concerned about small matters like drinking water, mosquito coils etc. This caring attitude of trainers helped in building trust in them. Though the amenities at the training venue were not very good, the attitude of trainers helped the group to resolve their problems. I was very impressed with the trainers skill in handling the situation and leading the group into a learning process.'





**Ambujakshan** reflected: 'Participatory training has worked wonders in my life. To start with, participatory training was conducted in a relaxed, friendly, informal conducive environment in which the distinction between the teacher and the taught, the trainer and the trainee was minimised, so that the osmotic action of interactive group learning took place smoothly. The seating arrangement mattered a lot. For instance, the circular or oval shaped seating arrangement at the training venue was a planned departure from the conventional arrangement practiced in schools, colleges, conventional seminars and trainings, which gave prominence to the teacher/trainer and emphasised the hierarchical nature of trainer-trainee relationship. The democratic spatial arrangement adopted in participatory training helped create a climate of equality, trust and freedom. The trainer was not only called the 'facilitator', but his posture, behaviour and attitude gave substance to the new term. The trainer made conscious efforts not to strengthen the image of the moralist demagogue associated with the conventional teacher/trainer. He took pains, especially in the beginning, to point out and reiterate not only verbally but also by deeds the non-formal and participative nature of training and its process. This helped to perceive the trainer-trainee relationship in a new light. The facilitator assumed the role of a guide and friend rather than that of an all-knowing preceptor. This relationship was maintained throughout the training period (21 days) and was continued after the training through follow up contacts. This facilitated the process of self-understanding, self-acceptance, and self-disclosure immensely among the participants. I discovered that in the participatory mode of learning, the learner creates and owns knowledge and s/he is a free and creative individual. In Participatory Training, learning is not only interesting and joyful, it also liberates and enhances the creativity of the learner. A person can become free of the load of unwanted traditions only by developing her/his own insights. Insight is liberative, but it can bloom only in a climate of freedom and friendliness, which is guaranteed in a participatory training atmosphere. I feel that participatory training methods are particularly relevant to the dalits, who were denied liberating education and were burdened with memories of subjugation and humiliation through centuries.'

**K.P Narayanan** said: 'I attended the state level training regarding panchayati raj and microplanning conducted in January 1996. I was attracted by the participatory nature of the entire course due to the method of communication used throughout the training, which laid great stress on experiential learning and sharing. The gap between theory and practice was effectively bridged by exposure to the stark rural realities of the locality. The semi-structured dialogue, the resource mapping and the transect walk, conducted with the people, provided substantial experiential backing to the soundness of the concepts related to participatory rural development.'





**Lilly Pushpam** said: 'I had the opportunity to undergo the training which was an intense process spread over fourteen days. For the first time, I understood the effectiveness of the participatory training methods. The things learnt experientially and in group settings influence people greatly and tend to go deeper into the mind and remain longer. Participatory training methodology takes away the boredom from the learning process. Another interesting insight that I gained is that participatory training is an effective promoter of equality and sharing among the participants. It does away with superior-inferior feeling and promotes democratic values. Hence it is most suited for participatory and equitable development. Helping to create an emotional inner anchor of self-worth is the starting point in personality change. Participatory training engages the entire person, not only his/her intellect as is the case with conventional training. The participants are present- body and soul at the training situation. Their entire self - conscious as well as unconscious- is totally engaged in the processes of change. In other words, the training is holistic and therefore produces deep and lasting changes. The quiet physical setting and the homely atmosphere are also elements promoting revision and change.'

**Mercy George** shared: 'Participatory training offers ample scope for self-expression in a supportive environment. Spontaneous self-expression leads to self-discovery, self-understanding that in turn triggers a chain reaction of action-reflection and development. The qualities of the facilitator are critical in this process.'

**G. Placid** reflected: 'The metamorphosis of the conventional teacher into the facilitator of participatory training is certainly a cardinal point. The relationship of the trainees with the facilitator of participatory training is different from the relationship with the conventional trainer, who is a detached, impersonal authority, while the facilitator of participatory training is surrounded by a warm aura of friendliness, empathy, concern and deep understanding. I was particularly attracted by the manner of presentation by facilitators, which had a peculiar flavour and force that made communication easy, homely, factual and growth promoting.'

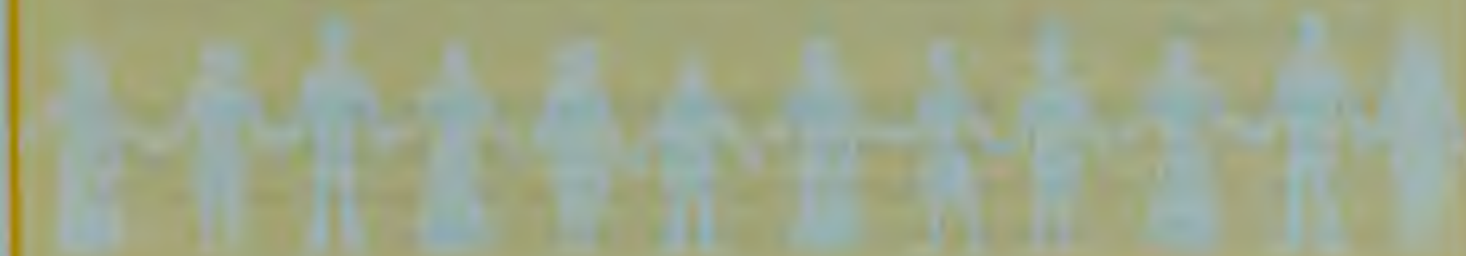
**G. Chandrababu** said: 'The training led to a number of new lessons regarding the processes involved in self/personal development, interpersonal relationships, group functioning etc., which proved to be very stimulating and profoundly growth promoting. I also developed important insights with regard to development work, particularly concerning the mobilisation and empowerment of the weaker sections like the dalits. Exposure to participatory methods, especially the participatory training experience, opened my eyes, and I clearly perceived the processes and methods most suitable for such organisation/community development work. More specifically I understood that the talents and capacities of the people and their leaders have to be identified and promoted. Without this capacity building there can be no real liberation or genuine development. Tremendous amounts of creative energy are locked up in the inner recesses of the self, which can be released by self-discovery and self-disclosure. Participatory training makes a difference because the participants are able to realise their individuality/personality. The supportive, non-threatening atmosphere of the training nurtures the development of the self. Debriefing, group interaction, feedback etc. are the moments when the magic of training is most visible.'




**L. Pankajakshan** said: 'The strength of participatory training lies in its emphasis on the discovery and activation of the genius within individuals and groups. Individuals are valued for what they are and their innate talents and capacities are allowed spontaneous expression and development. This is akin to the non-violent approach of Gandhi. In participatory training, ideas and approaches are not imposed from the outside, as it usually happens in conventional training programmes, where the trainees are the passive recipients of 'the wisdom' of supposedly superior intellects. Participatory training is totally democratic and is led by the real and felt needs of the participants. During training, the new orientation is communicated by sharing personal experiences, group interaction, practical work etc. Learning becomes eminently experiential and joyous.'

**K. C. Thankachan** reflected: 'The power of participatory training lies mainly in the specially designed interactive methods of the courses. People are fed up with the repetitious, formal, teacher-centred, authoritarian, male-dominated mode of traditional education. This smothers the creative impulses in the learners. Group interactions are the best agents to trigger a positive change.'

**P. M. Dev** said: 'Participatory training needs to be propagated and promoted in all walks of life; beginning with the home and right up to political administration. Participatory training offers the proper tools for new ways of learning that can lead to the solution of the manifold problems and challenges faced by mankind in the new millennium. The capacity of the people for rational thinking and critical analysis is not developed by the conventional modes of education nor by the socio-political ethos and practices. A change from this situation is necessary and participatory training is the most suitable tool for effecting the desired change. It makes learning relevant, contextual and experiential. The learner becomes the creator of his/her learning. The atmosphere of realism, freedom, friendliness provided in participatory training promotes integration, leading to a balanced, holistic, rational frame of mind. Participatory training methodology is the greatest friend of democracy.'







**Binoy Acharya** said: ' I attended participatory training as a part of self-development activity in 1986 when I was working in PRIA. I found this training interesting, as it was different from the conventional training. During my college days I had read Paulo Friere's and Ivan Illich's works but was not very sure about its application. During training, some friends and I criticised the training as we were not very happy with splitting in to groups, discussing and reassembling for presentation. During the second phase things began to get clearer when I was exposed to methods in detail. The greatest learning was the facilitatory style which is the unique feature of participatory training. Participatory training is a rigorous way of understanding reality, and through facilitation one can engage people in critical analysis of their reality. People have experiences, they have the abilities to understand and analyse their context, they just need the space to do so. Participatory training treats people as subjects, not as objects. Participatory training can be undertaken with 30 or 3000 people, with illiterates and highly literate people, it is a matter of how one facilitates the process. In the experiential learning process, the challenge is to balance the techniques and the learning process. Techniques should not overpower the learning. Having a good understanding of techniques but poor facilitation skills and losing control over processes is ineffective in participatory training. Participatory Training focuses on collective learning, it is about learning in a group, with the group. It is an instrument of social change that involves analysis and action. Participants learning are very important and as a trainer one should not compromise with the learning of participants. I remember during apprenticeship, in the middle of a session I stopped and requested the facilitator to take the session forward as I was not able to handle it properly. My other colleague felt that I was moving in the right direction but I felt that the learning was inadequate. When you are the trainer, you need to be comfortable. In participatory training, importance must be given to the self since one has to facilitate the learning process and keep the ego hassles to a minimum.'

**Alka** said: 'During training the trainers role as facilitator and caretaker is worth appreciating. Their role in handling logistics as well as sessions was an eye opener. The behaviour, punctuality and hard work left a deep impression on my mind. They prepared for next sessions well into the night and yet looked so fresh in the morning. They used to mix with us, but could detach easily during sessions.'

**Jayaben Vaghela** said : An important feature of participatory training is that trainers tend to give personal attention to the learners. This results in a faster learning process. I learnt a lot from the training sessions. If people's experiences are valued it makes them more associated with the process. At the community level, village members found it strange when we asked what they wanted to learn. They said nobody has ever asked them to articulate their needs, but when they were asked to express what they wanted to learn, they started thinking about what was relevant to them.'

**Bhurabhai Nagabhai** and **Jalabhai Sanghabhai**, Sarpanchs of Sarala village said : 'During role-play in the training, I learned about the effective methods of conducting gram sabha meetings. We played the role of sarpanch, some played the role of women and Talati. The experiences before us revealed the reality and complexity of situations.'



Participatory training derives its strength from adult learning. Hence a large emphasis is placed on the ability of adults to learn, grow and change even in adult life. Most of the times it is conveyed to adults that doors of learning are closed when one reaches a particular age in the life time. Participatory training underpins that learning takes place everyday in ones' life cycle. Adults are enriched with experiences and have a well defined self-concept that needs encouragement to be uplifted. This necessitates appreciating the knowledge and involving them in a process whereby they realise their potential as social change agents. The learning is assimilated in an environment which is safe and open, where people do not hesitate to share what they feel, where inhibitions and fears are renounced to give way to confidence and renewed faith. In a proper environment each learner treats the other learner as a peer, everybody is respected, each individual is accepted, differences are appreciated and considered desirable, people can commit mistakes and learn from those mistakes. As adults learn through experiences, a focus on experiential learning is placed in participatory training. A systematic sharing of past and present experiences of learners by various methods, collective analysis and processing enables learners to enhance learning. Collectivism is stressed upon in participatory training, and the focus is largely on groups. Groups and organisations are treated as microcosms of a society. Any change in the group, kindles the hope of a change in society. Participatory training aims at awareness, knowledge and skill building and therefore offers a choice of methods to suit the purpose. The trainer's role as a facilitator to make people own the process of learning is very crucial. In this light, his/her attitudes and behaviour also become vital. It is essential for the trainer to be sensitive to learners and at the same time be aware of his/her self to allow a free flow of energy and thoughts by diluting the boundaries between the learner and the learned.

**Key principles of participatory training are :**

- **It is learner centered**
- **It necessitates combined focus on awareness, knowledge, and skills**
- **It focuses on experiential learning**
- **It emphasises on a suitable, non threatening learning environment**
- **It focuses on group and collective learning**
- **When participation is valued, learners develop their own norms and values and take responsibility for their own learning**
- **It lays stress on trainer's role and behaviour.**





# *Perspectives*

The stories in the previous sections present some experiences in Participatory Training Methodology. This approach to learning has now had more than two decades of evolution and application in India and elsewhere.

The distinctiveness of Participatory Training Methodology in this approach is highlighted in this section.

## 1.0 Heritage

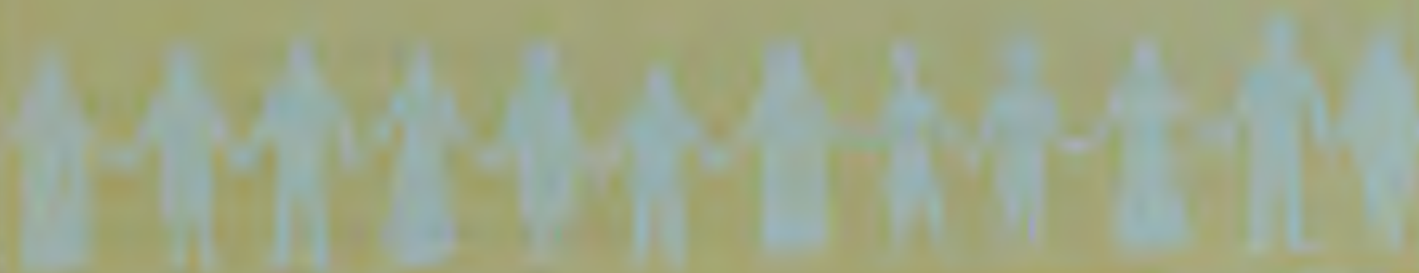
While Participatory Training as a methodology and its practice has gained enormous acceptance in a wide-range of development arenas, previous sections allude to a distinctive approach which can best be described as the PRIA "**Gharana**". "**Gharana**" is the concept of heritage, in which Indian systems of music and dance are expressed. Typically, a Gharana represents a tradition of music or dance that emerges from one or two founding Gurus. These Gurus pass on the tradition of the Gharana to their close disciples. These disciples in turn become active agents for the spread of that Gharana of music or dance in the Indian tradition. Several characteristics are associated with a Gharana. **Firstly**, it reflects a particular emphasis of certain individuals. **Secondly**, it exemplifies a set of principles and values. **Thirdly**, it promotes a new approach to a creative pursuit. When these three characteristics are applied to the PRIA Gharana of Participatory Training Methodology, one can appreciate the distinctiveness of Participatory Training.

The founding "Gurus" of Participatory Training Methodology in this tradition are Rajesh Tandon and Om Shrivastava. Together, they brought together an understanding of participatory learning, adult learning and social change. Their distinctive contribution was on emphasising the link between **learning and change**. This equation is a founding pillar of Participatory Training Methodology in the PRIA Gharana. The **second** aspect relates to the fundamental principles and values in the PRIA **Gharana**. Participatory Training Methodology is seen as an intervention that aims to empower individuals and collectives to bring about significant improvements in their lives and situations. Empowerment of individuals and groups is the core of Participatory Training Methodology in PRIA Gharana. This purpose is rooted in an article of faith that all individuals are capable of and interested in learning to transform their own reality. This faith in the motivation and capacities of people (women, tribals, dalits, youth, illiterate, poor, marginalised people) is the hallmark of Participatory Training Methodology in the PRIA **Gharana**.

**Finally** this **Gharana** of Participatory Training Methodology emphasises creative improvisation of methods and tools of learning. The **Gharana** is not method or tool-bound. Participatory Training Methodology can be applied through a combination of methods and techniques, creatively applied in a given context for a specific group of learners. This creative improvisation is possible only if the facilitators of Participatory Training Methodology have developed their own capacities. Thus this Gharana of Participatory Training Methodology believes in investing substantially in the capacities of individuals and institutions who have taken on the challenge of being trainers and facilitators of others' learning. In that sense, PRIA **Gharana** of Participatory Training Methodology believes that trainers and facilitators in Participatory Training Methodology are on a mission and their vocation is almost a spiritual exercise which requires a great deal of responsibility, competence and sensitivity.



Fundamental to this approach, therefore, is the strong emphasis that this methodology places on self-improvement and self-development of trainers and facilitators. The stories described in the previous sections illustrate how the personal lives of individuals were transformed in significant ways. This approach to Participatory Training Methodology lays stress on the fact that the changes in the work and life (personal life and social life) of individuals are a benchmark of the impact of this methodology. It emphasises the need for congruence between changes in the behaviours and functioning of individual facilitators with the changes in their organisations and communities. External changes which are brought about through the interventions of Participatory Training Methodology are untenable unless supported and reinforced by internal changes in the persona of the facilitators and practitioners of Participatory Training Methodology. This is perhaps the single most important and unique feature of Participatory Training Methodology in the PRIA **Gharana**.



## 2.0 Roots

PRIA **Gharana** derives its roots from a wide-spectrum of intellectual and professional traditions. Substantive spiritual links are also traceable in this approach to Participatory Training Methodology. A major influence in the elaboration of the methodology is **Participatory Research**. The philosophy and perspective of Participatory Research believes that **knowledge is a source of power**. Empowerment of hitherto marginalised sections of society (of relatively powerless individuals in family, community and work place) requires acquisition and utilisation of knowledge by such individuals and collectives.

The perspective of participatory research also implies the use of **popular knowledge**. It highlights that individuals and groups have knowledge-in-use which they have acquired by the sheer act of living and struggling. This popular knowledge may not be articulated in printed form as books or journals, but this knowledge is the basis for their actions today. It is this knowledge that gets systematised and legitimised in the perspective of Participatory Research.

A systematic and structured learning process in participatory training facilitates the articulation and use of this knowledge. Therefore, participatory training provides the bridge between knowledge and action.

Another professional heritage of this methodology is **adult learning**. The significance of learners' participation, influence on and control over their own learning process is emphasised. Learning is seen as an exercise that involves the totality of the person. Learning is emotional, cognitive and practical. It entails use of feelings, intellect and motor skills. Thus synthesis of ideas, feelings and actions is the fulcrum around which adult learning takes place.

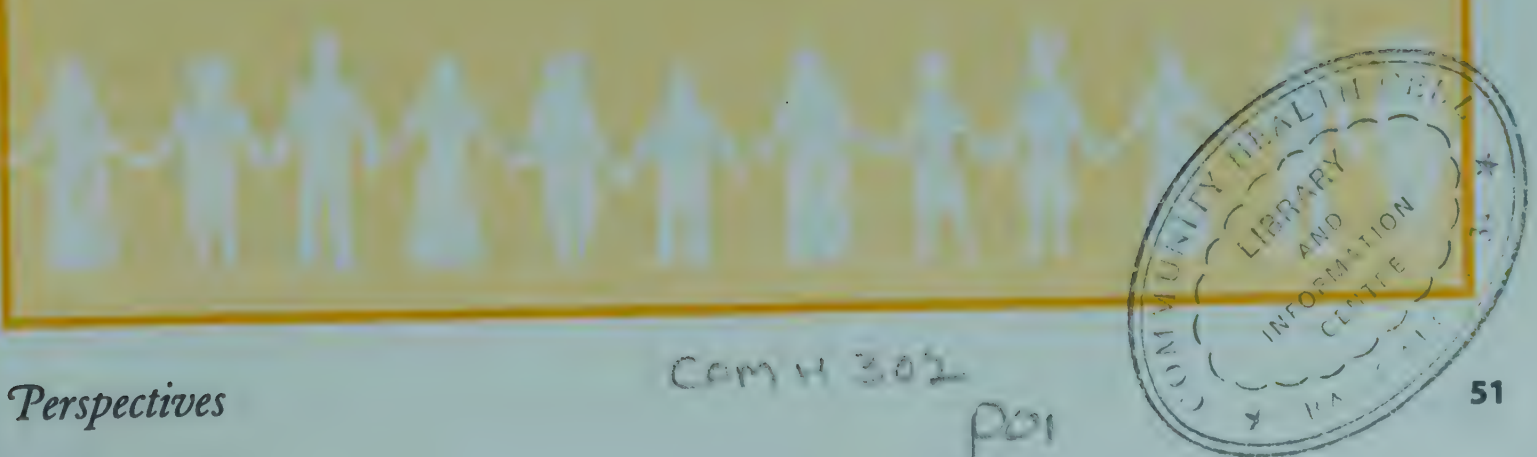
A related historical tradition is that of **experiential learning** which emphasises the need to systematically learn from one's own experiences and those of significant others. Participatory Training Methodology, therefore, creates and applies methods that utilise experiences of the learners themselves and those of their colleagues in similar situations as opportunities for and materials from which learning can be synthesised.

These intellectual traditions have also reinforced systems of learning in our own context. In the Indian tradition, Vipassana as a source of insight is practiced through meditation and self-respect. The Buddhist tradition emphasises the need for seeking feedback and criticism of one's own being in order to create openness to learning. Various spiritual traditions in Indian history emphasise the importance of continuous learning by reflecting on our own experi-



ence and sharing in others' experience. In the Sufi system, "sangat" (sharing in the presence of others) was emphasised as a way of transformative learning.

Gandhian vision described the "Swaraj" or freedom as an inner transformation first and foremost. When a person feels liberated and empowered she can liberate and empower others. "Swadhyay" (self-study) tradition of Pandu Shastri has gained enormous following in recent years, largely because of the appeal of that approach in internal reflection and collective learning. These traditions emphasise that enhancement of competence in others is predicated on greater self-improvement and transformation of self by the facilitators themselves.



### 3.0 Challenge

The stories in previous sections illustrate the importance of trainers' behaviour towards learners. The care and concern of trainers towards each learner has been an important aspect of their learning. (The seriousness with which a trainer promotes the learning of group is noticed and it creates an impact.) The process of individual and collective learning is encouraged by the learning orientation of the trainers themselves.

As can be seen from the previous sections, the use of participatory training methodology has spread in different contexts. It has been applied for the learning of workers about their rights, associations and health and safety. Application has focused on building collectives of tribals and their control over natural resources. Women's empowerment has been a major focus of application of Participatory Training Methodology. In a way, staff and volunteers of voluntary associations and civil society organisations have benefited most from the application of Participatory Training Methodology. Health workers and medical practitioners, teachers and educators, extension workers and agricultural workers have all seen the outcomes of learning through the use of Participatory Training Methodology. Many government programmes and institutions have applied the methodology effectively. The Integrated Child Development Scheme (ICDS) programme is one such example. Women's Development Programmes in several states of the country are other examples of the same.

While training of trainers programmes in different languages over the last two decades gained more visibility, as the stories of ***Chains of Change*** indicate, application of the methodology has been much wider and much more comprehensive. Within this period, of course, there have been other practitioners whose work has been similar to the PRIA Gharana in Participatory Training Methodology. SEARCH in Bangalore is one such institution, Kamala Bhasin through Freedom for Hunger Campaign promoted this methodology systematically, Fr. Heridero in Gujarat and Dutta Savle in Maharashtra have also been eloquent proponents of this methodology in their own ways.

In a country where traditions of learning and knowledge go back thousands of years, it is indeed ironic that institutions of training and education are languishing today. Our system of formal education is promoting everything except learning. Our colleges and universities, departments of social sciences, schools of professional studies are not designed to promote enquiry, curiosity and innovation by young learners. In this country, nearly 400 government training institutions- from the very village based panchayat training schools to those which train the seniormost public officials, are present. Yet, evaluation of every development programme repeatedly underscores the poor quality of human resource preparation in all of them. Enormous resources have been applied to build training centres and physical infrastructures. But preparation of people to enable them to learn and promoting learning for empowerment remains largely an unfulfilled dream till now.

The stories in the previous sections suggest how the experience of Participatory Training



Methodology has energised, enthused, excited and empowered these people. However, this has not spread to the lives of the millions. The fundamental premise of a democratic society is the ability of its people to reflect, analyse, articulate, debate and decide. These human processes need to be learnt individually and collectively. It is not adequate to announce that India is a democracy. What is needed are interventions and opportunities so that democratic practice is enabled in the family, in the community, at the work place, in all aspects of human endeavour. We are all citizens of this country, but very few of us understand or practice citizenship. We decry the state of our leadership in public arena. Leadership is not a birthright, citizenship is not about passports, democracy is not about periodic elections.

Human capital can be appreciated only if society becomes a learning society. Viewed in this vast and visionary sense, Participatory Training Methodology has a long way to go; its outreach and application has to multiply in a rapid and extensive manner. In the evolution of PRIA **Gharana** for Participatory Training Methodology, a few individuals played important roles initially. The spread and further improvisation of this approach requires many more promoters, champions and entrepreneurs. The stories in this document suggest how these **Chains of Change** are human chains who strengthen connectivity and create energy. This document wishes to promote development in this very direction.



The first part of the report deals with the general situation of the country. It is a very interesting and informative study of the country's development. The second part of the report deals with the specific details of the country's development. It is a very detailed and informative study of the country's development.

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# About PRIA

## PRIA

AN INTERNATIONAL CENTRE FOR LEARNING AND PROMOTION OF PARTICIPATION AND DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE

Participatory Research in Asia (PRIA), a non-profit voluntary organization based in Delhi, India has been promoting people centred development initiatives within the perspective of participatory research. It aims to strengthen popular knowledge, demystify dominant concepts and promote experiential learning and people's participation. For nearly two decades this has been the basis of supporting empowerment of poor and the oppressed in PRIA's work. It learns about challenges of promoting people's participation and governance through local grassroots action via schematic documentation. It facilitates learning through sharing of its research findings and capacity building, by promoting a conducive environment and supportive public policies towards its end. PRIA operates locally, nationally, regionally and globally.

## VISION

PRIA's vision of a desirable world is based on values of equity, gender justice and freedom.

A balance between economic and social development and citizen's rights and responsibilities with ecological regeneration ~ which gives equal importance to local priorities and global demands and a balance between authority and accountability.

## MISSION

- To work towards democratic governance in society PRIA identifies poor and the marginalised, focusing on changing women's roles and status as agents and leaders of change.
- Economic inequity requires addressing of issues of poverty and powerlessness.
- Social exclusion entails mainstreaming participation by youth, tribal, dalits elders and focusing on the rights of the workers and ordinary citizens.

## STRATEGIES

**Capacity Building** - A wide variety of methods are used in enhancing and strengthening capacity building at individual and institutional levels.

**Policy Advocacy** - It entails influencing policies from vantage point of enabling participation and empowerment of the marginalised by schematic and ongoing monitoring of existing policies, their implementation and reformulation. It builds networks, coalitions and alliances of like minded individuals and organisations to facilitate dialogues across differing perspectives and players and establishes linkages and accountabilities between micro and macro issues.

**Knowledge Building** - Entails engaging in critical and systematic study of issues and institutions, which encourages or discourages a citizen from participating in a democratic process. New knowledge is aimed at social change involving partnership with the beneficiaries. The aim of empowerment of citizens is to shape their lives, which is achieved by linkages and accountability between research and action.







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